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Gf Closure

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CITE FBIS/LONDON 18143

TO: FBIS INFO FBIS/GULF.

RYBAT

SUBJECT: BBC RESPONSE TO GULF CLOSURE

REF: FBIS 21452

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1. FOLLOWING IS BBC RECEPTION DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO COVERAGE QUESTIONS RAISED BY POSSIBLE GULF CLOSURE:

A. IRAN

--TEHRAN DS: BBC COULD TAKE IT WITHIN EXISTING STAFFING LEVELS, BUT IT CANNOT ALWAYS BE HEARD BECAUSE OF TEHRAN'S COMPLETELY ERRATIC USE OF FREQUENCIES, AS WELL AS SEASONAL VARIABILITY. A BACKSTOP IS ESSENTIAL BECAUSE OF THE UNPREDICTABILITY OF FREQUENCIES. ALSO, BBC WOULD NOT WANT TO TAKE EARLY CASTS LIVE ON A REGULAR BASIS AS THIS WOULD ENTAIL AN UNACCEPTABLE NIGHT SHIFT; ANY EARLY COVERAGE WOULD HAVE TO BE RECORDED FOR DAYSHIFT PROCESSING AFTER 0700 GMT.

--TEHRAN IRNA ARABIC (NOT CITED BY HQS): THIS IS VALUABLE COVERAGE AND IS MONITORABLE AT BBC, BUT WOULD HAVE STAFFING IMPLICATIONS DEPENDING IN PART ON WHAT OTHER ADDITIONAL ARABIC THEY MIGHT HAVE TO ASSUME. COULD JN TAKE THIS ON?

--TEHRAN IS ARABIC (NOT CITED BY HQS): ALSO, VERY VALUABLE COVERAGE. POSSIBLY MONITORABLE VIA ISLAMABAD, BUT WOULD TAKE UP AN INORDINATE AMOUNT OF LINE TIME. COULD JN TAKE THIS BACK?

--TEHRAN IS CASTS IN RUSSIAN, PASHTO: BBC COULD

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ABSORB THESE BUT THEIR VALUE AND PRODUCTIVITY ARE
QUESTIONABLE. PASHTO COULD BE TAKEN VIA ISLAMABAD, BUT IS IT
WORTH IT? A RECEPTION/PRODUCTIVITY REVIEW WOULD BE NECESSARY
BUT IT IS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER AT THIS POINT RESOURCES SHOULD
BE EXPENDED ON SURVEYING THESE CASTS

B. USSR:

--MOSCOW PERSIAN: BBC COULD HANDLE WEEKEND CASTS
WITHIN EXISTING STAFFING LEVELS, PER GULF'S CURRENT COVERAGE.
BBC CAN HEAR THE 1100 GMT CAST, BUT A SURVEY WOULD BE NEEDED TO
DETERMINE IF LATER CASTS ARE MONITORABLE VIA ISLAMABAD.

C. SUDAN, YEMENS:

EAU CAN PICK UP THE OMDURMAN CITED AND RECEIVE ADFN
NEWS AGENCY; IT CAN ALSO HEAR THE YEMENS. BUT MORE ARABS WOULD
BE NEEDED AND THEY ARE VERY HARD TO FIND AT EAU'S LOCATION.

D. SAUDI ARABIA:

THEORETICALLY IT WOULD BE NICE TO TAKE ENTIRE SAUDI
PACKAGE, DOMESTIC SERVICE AND SPA, BUT THIS HAS STAFFING
IMPLICATIONS WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE ASSESSED AFTER FIRST
RESEARCHING AUDIBILITY. AN AUDIBILITY CHECK OF THE DOMESTIC
SERVICE IS BEING LAID ON. ALSO, RECEPTION IS SEASONALLY
VARIABLE. RECOMMEND AUDIBILITY CHECKS SPRING/SUMMER/FALL AT
N, NC.

IN SUM: TEHRAN AND SAUDI COVERAGE IS OF PARAMOUNT
IMPORTANCE. ANY INCREASE IN ARABIC COVERAGE WOULD HAVE
STAFFING IMPLICATIONS. ASSUMPTION OF SAUDI COVERAGE ALONE
WOULD PROBABLY REQUIRE TWO MORE ARABS AT A MINIMUM. SINCE THE
RC'S SAUDI PACKAGE WAS ASSUMED BY GULF, INCREASED MAGHREB,
PARTICULARLY LIBYAN, COVERAGE AND PROCESSING HAS ABSORBED ANY
SURPLUS BBC ARABIC CAPABILITY. THEY WILL MESSAGE EAU ON ITS
CAPABILITIES, WILL SURVEY AUDIBILITY OF SAUDI AND TEHRAN
COVERAGE, AND WILL DEVELOP STAFFING IMPLICATIONS FROM THAT
BEFORE MAKING ANY COMMITMENTS. ON GULF COUNTRIES (ABU DHABI,
DOHA, MUSCAT) THEY WOULD DO WHAT THEY COULD, RECEPTION AND

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RODUCTIVITY WARRANTING.

2. RECOMMEND NC AND JN BE SOUNDED OUT ON RECEPTION OF
SAUDI, YEMENI, AND SUDAN COVERAGE TO SEE WHAT BACKSTOP
POTENTIAL THEY MAY HAVE.

3. THEY ASK WHETHER SITUATION AT BAHRAIN WOULD OFFER SCOPE
FOR LEAVING SMALL ARABIC/PERSIAN UNIT BEHIND, EITHER
TEMPORARILY TO EASE COVERAGE TRANSITION OR PERMANENTLY TO PIPE
POORLY HEARD IRANIAN AND ARABIC SOURCES A LA ISLAMAPAD.

4. THEY CANNOT BE SPECIFIC NOW BUT HAVE NOTED POSSIBLE
INTEREST IN PICKING UP SOME OF GF STAFF DEPENDING ON HOW
COVERAGE AND RESOURCES PICTURE DEVELOPS.

5. FILE: NONE. DECL OADR DRV COV 2-82 ALL SECRET.
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